**PRESS RELEASE**

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**ONCE UPON A TIME…**

**VisitScotland launches** [**Scotland’s Storybook Trail**](http://static.visitscotland.com/pdf/scotlands-storybook-trail.pdf)

* Scotland’s Storybook Trail includes a collection of characters and stories with connections to Scotland either by author, by location or by experience.
* The self-led trail will comprise of a map which will be available online and in print from select VisitScotland iCentres and literary outlets.
* Book lovers of all ages can embark on a literary adventure inspired by their favourite storybook characters and discover new stories to enjoy.
* Characters include Harry Potter, Peter Pan, The Gruffalo, Thumble Tumble, Peter Rabbit, The Howlat and Greyfriars Bobby.

From Peter Rabbit to Peter Pan, Harry Potter to The Howlat, Scotland has inspired some of the world’s best-loved literary creations.

Whether it’s history, landscapes, wildlife or even architecture, for decades authors have used some of the country’s greatest assets to create characters that continue to delight readers of all ages.

In recognition of this, VisitScotland has launched, [**Scotland’s Storybook Trail**](http://static.visitscotland.com/pdf/scotlands-storybook-trail.pdf)**,** a collection of places with links to some of the most celebrated characters in children’s literature.

The trail, which comprises  of a colourful map hosted on [visitscotland.com](http://static.visitscotland.com/pdf/scotlands-storybook-trail.pdf) and will be available at selected VisitScotland iCentres , as well as bookshops and libraries across Scotland, will help bookworms embark on their own adventures across the country, learning more about their favourite stories and discovering new tales inspired by or written in Scotland.

Featured locations include the **birthplace of Peter Pan creator, JM Barrie in Kirriemuir, Angus**; the **Isle of Coll**, the inspiration of Katie Morag’s fictional home on the Isle of Struay; **the Scottish Owl Centre in West Lothian** where readers can meet some feathered friends, similar to those that feature in the Harry Potter series; and **Birnam Arts** in Perthshire, the region that inspired Beatrix Potter’s famous creations. And it’s not just the book locations themselves that will appeal to young readers – the trail includes some great bookshops and festivals to discover around Scotland.

**Tourism Secretary Fiona Hyslop said:** *“In this, Scotland’s Year of Young People, the Storybook Trail not only celebrates Scotland’s rich literary heritage and incredible landscapes, but it also provides an opportunity to encourage children to read for pleasure and develop a life-long love of books.*

*“With so many locations across the country linked to characters in children’s literature, I am sure the trail will act as a magnet for visitors from home and abroad who will experience our beautiful, vibrant country.”*

**Jenni Steele, Film and Creative Industries Manager at VisitScotland, said:** *“Scotland has world-class literary links. Our landscapes, history and people have inspired writers for centuries, helping to bring to life enduring characters that capture the imaginations of not just youngsters but grown-ups too.*

*“A great story has to have great characters and that’s what inspired Scotland’s Storybook Trail. We wanted to create something, as we celebrate Scotland’s Year of Young People 2018, that encourages booklovers of all ages to discover the places and people behind these famous fictional friends. “*

**Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, the national charity changing lives through reading and writing, said***: “Scotland has a rich history of iconic literary characters, created or inspired by its places and people. Visiting locations with a special connection to favourite stories or figures is a real thrill for fans of any age, and Scotland’s Storybook Trail is packed with superb suggestions.*

*“Now is the perfect time to take a trip round our beautiful country and enjoy again, or for the first time, some of the greatest Scottish stories ever told and the places where the creative spark started – just don’t forget to pack a book.”*

So take a magical adventure from page to place and discover just some of the Scottish locations with literary links to best-loved stories;

**Harry Potter – JK Rowling**

Grab your wands and prepare for a magic adventure! Visit Tom Riddle’s grave at [**Greyfriars Kirkyard**](https://greyfriarskirk.com/visit-us/kirkyard/), meet some of Hedwig’s feathered friends at the [**Scottish Owl Centre**](https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/scottish-owl-centre-p1195521) or join a tour of the Capital to find out how Edinburgh’s buildings and people inspired JK Rowling’s smash-hit series about a boy wizard. Film fans  -make sure to hop aboard the ‘Hogwarts Express’ across the [**Glenfinnan Viaduct**](https://www.visitscotland.com/info/towns-villages/glenfinnan-p236571).

**Treasure Island – Robert Louis Stevenson**

Robert Louis Stevenson’s swashbuckling adventure was written during a stay in[**Braemar**](https://www.visitscotland.com/info/towns-villages/braemar-p237841)**.** It’s thought Stevenson based some of the characters on people he met in the village. Treasure Island is also rumoured to have been inspired by [**Fidra Island**](https://www.visiteastlothian.org/explore/coast/islands) in East Lothian which the writer used to watch from the area known now as Yellowcraig. Today, rather than pirates you are more likely to find puffins as the island is an RSPB Scotland reserve.

**Peter Pan – JM Barrie**

Make sure to pack your pixie dust as you head off on an awfully big adventure in search of Peter Pan. A statue of ‘The Boy Who Never Grew Up’ can be found at [**JM Barrie’s Birthplace**](https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/jm-barries-birthplace-p250601) in Kirriemuir, Angus but it was [**Moat Brae**](https://www.peterpanmoatbrae.org/) in Dumfries, where Barrie lived as a boy, that inspired Neverland, the enchanted faraway place where Peter Pan and the Lost Boys outwit Captain Hook.

**Beano, The Dandy and Oor Wullie**

The antics of Dennis and his pals in Beano, and A’body’s favourite wee laddie, Oor Wullie have been published every week for decades by DC Thomson who are based in Dundee with Beano recently celebrating its 80th birthday. Look out for statues of fellow DC Thomson legends, [**Desperate Dan, Minnie the Minx**](https://www.dundee.com/activity/desperate-dan-statue-and-%E2%80%98dawg)as well as[**Oor Wullie**](https://www.dundee.com/activity/oor-wullie), in Dundee city centre. And don’t miss the chance to grab a selfie on **Bash Street.**

**Katie Morag – Mairi Hedderwick**

The Isle of [**Coll**](https://www.visitscotland.com/info/towns-villages/isle-of-coll-p1162401) in the Inner Hebrides was the real-life inspiration for Katie Morag’s home on the Isle of Struay.  Take a picnic to the beach, explore the island’s only real village, Arinagour, and keep an eye out for the whitewashed cottages that look just like the illustrations in Mairi Hedderwick’s books.

**Peter Rabbit and Friends – Beatrix Potter**

Beatrix Potter created her most famous fluffy friend, Peter Rabbit, following childhood summer holidays in Dunkeld, watching and drawing wildlife. [**Birnam Arts**](https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/birnam-arts-and-the-beatrix-potter-exhibition-p247851) is a great place to learn about the region that inspired her, you may also meet some of her other characters in the [**Beatrix Potter Exhibition Garden**.](https://www.birnamarts.com/visitor-tourist-attractions/beatrix-potter-exhibition-garden/)

**The Gruffalo – Julia Donaldson  and Axel Scheffler**

Take a stroll through the deep dark wood on [**Ardkinglas Estate**](https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/ardkinglas-house-and-gardens-p255981) in search of the Gruffalo. Look out for the Mouse who’ll help guide you along the trail which tells the story, translated into Scots, of Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler’s famous, loveable beast.

**Thumble Tumble – AH Proctor**

The Isle of [**Arran**](https://www.visitscotland.com/destinations-maps/arran/)is the extraordinary little home of this extraordinary little witch. Visit [**Brodick Castle**](https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/brodick-castle-garden-country-park-p248491)and [**Lochranza Castle**](https://www.visitscotland.com/info/towns-villages/lochranza-p243441) where Thumble Tumble’s first two magical adventures were set. Keep your eyes peeled for Night Witches, Sea Dragons and Flower Nymphs – you never know what magic you might encounter on this spectacular island.

**Why not continue your literary adventure with a visit to one of Scotland’s book festivals?**

[**Edinburgh International Book Festival**](https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/)

**11-27 August**

As the world’s first UNESCO City of Literature, the Edinburgh International Book Festival is an unmissable event for book-lovers. The Baillie Gifford Children’s Programme is perfect for young readers from tots to teens, with hundreds of events including interactive sessions, fun performances, storytelling and workshops with authors and illustrators.

[**Killearn Children’s Festival**](http://www.culturestirling.org/)

**2 September**

A fun-filled day packed with events and activities aimed a little bookworms. Learn how to draw a dragon, get tips on writing your own stories or listen to a host of tales from authors of some of the most exciting new books.

[**Wigtown Book Festival**](http://www.wigtownbookfestival.com/)

**21-30 September**

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the annual award-winning festival takes place in Wigtown, Scotland’s National Book Town. For ten days in September, the town buzzes with book events as well as theatre, music and a dedicated Children’s Garden offers activities to appeal to younger readers.

[**Borders Book Festival**](http://www.bordersbookfestival.org/)

**13-16 June 2019**

The hugely popular Baillie Gifford Borders Book Festival, which in 2018 attracted record audiences, is always a highlight of the literary calendar and regularly welcomes some of the most well-known writers in the country.   The Family Book Festival offers a wonderful selection of events with sessions from some of the best-loved authors for children, as well as free activities.

**To find more book festivals across Scotland visit** <https://literaturealliancescotland.co.uk/events/find-a-book-festival/>

**For more inspiration to entertain little book fans visit:** [www.visitscotland.com/blog/family-2/storybook-trail/](http://www.visitscotland.com/blog/family-2/storybook-trail/)

ENDS

**IMAGE CAPTION:** Credit Julie Howden

6 year-old Charlotte Brady from Invergowrie takes inspiration from Scotland’s Storybook Trail to learn more about Peter Rabbit at the Beatrix Potter Exhibition & Garden at Birnam Arts, Perthshire.

6 year old Charlotte Brady from Invergowrie and Carter (aged 6), Angus (aged 4) and Finn McKay (aged 2) from Dundee take inspiration from Scotland’s Storybook Trail to learn more about Peter Rabbit at the Beatrix Potter Exhibition & Garden at Birnam Arts, Perthshire.

**For further information and images please contact:**

Louise Purves

Senior PR Officer

VisitScotland

louise.purves@visitscotland.com/ 0131 472 2052

**Notes to editors**

**About VisitScotland**

* VisitScotland had launched a brand new global campaign, Scotland is Now.  To find out more go to [www.scotlandisnow.com](http://www.scotlandisnow.com)  or join the conversation by using #ScotlandIsNow
* VisitScotland’s Community site was set up for the Scottish public to help, engage and enthuse potential visitors about the country.  To get involved go to: [www.visitscotland.com/community](http://www.visitscotland.com/community)
* For holiday information on Scotland go to [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com)
* To ensure everyone can safely enjoy Scotland’s amazing countryside and landscapes, VisitScotland encourages all visitors to fully respect their surroundings by behaving in a responsible and appropriate way.
* For VisitScotland’s press releases go to [www.visitscotland.org/media\_centre.aspx](http://www.visitscotland.org/media_centre.aspx),
* For tourism statistics and frequently asked questions go to [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org)

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